



October 1, 2001

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Executive Director
South Florida Water Management District
3301 Gun Club Road
West Palm Beach, FL 33406

**Subject: — Aquifer Storage and Recovery Pilot Projects,
Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan**

Dear Mr. Dean:

On behalf of the 1000 Friends of Florida, I am writing this letter to express our thoughts on the Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) Pilot Projects associated with the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP). While we understand the importance of ASRs to the overall CERP strategy, we want to convey our interest in seeing this technology, and its effects on potable water supplies adjacent to Lake Okeechobee, be carefully evaluated, as now provided for in CERP, before full scale implementation begins.

We have received a copy of Audubon of Florida's excellent letter to you of August 16, 2001, and want to endorse the many fine points raised in that correspondence. Without question, the points made concerning the development of an aquifer management plan, ASR contingency plan, addressing the concerns of the National Academy of Sciences CROGEE group as well as the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force (SFERTF), and the critical need for continuous and open public and scientific scrutiny are all worthy of the most immediate attention. Our organization firmly believes that immediate and priority attention must be given to these issues in order to properly answer the many ASR questions that have surfaced.

As presented at the August 2, 2001, Water Resource Advisory Commission meeting, implementation of the CERP ASR pilot projects are proceeding to answer the many questions about applying this storage technology. I am aware that the current CERP ASR Program includes 333 ASR wells, and that nowhere in the world is ASR technology proposed at this scale. The ASR Issue Team and Committee for Restoration of the Greater Everglades Ecosystem (CROGEE) — both commissioned by the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force's Working Group - raised several technical issues that need to be addressed. As noted previously in this correspondence, 1000 Friends believes there should be no higher priority than addressing these issues. The strategy of conducting ASR Pilot

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Projects at Lake Okeechobee, Caloosahatchee River, and Western Hillsboro Basin – combined with the ASR Regional Study to more fully evaluate the 333-well program and its effects on the environment and existing water users must necessarily answer faithfully all of the questions posed by CROGEE and SFERTF. As you also recall at the August 2nd WRAC meeting, Ms. Cynthia Larimore raised several questions regarding the potential effects of ASR on the drinking water for Pahokee, Belle Glade, and South Bay. These are legitimate questions that must be answered in order to guarantee that CERP will have no detrimental effects to those communities totally dependent upon Lake Okeechobee for the drinking water.

It is also our suggestion that the District do everything reasonable to ensure that the public, the media, and the scientific community are given frequent and easy access to the ASR pilot information and related projects as it is collected. We believe it would be most helpful if periodic supplements in local newspapers could be developed to keep the public informed. This effort should be done in conjunction with regular seminars focused on the scientific community where peer reviews of the information produced can be examined, questioned, and verified. Although the WRAC on which we serve is useful in alerting some more informed members of the public about this work should by no means considered adequate by itself in making the communication of this information as public as possible.

As a member organization of the Water Resource Advisory Commission, we encourage you to continue your efforts with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to conduct as quickly as possible the necessary data collection and scientific studies to truly evaluate the ASR technology for the benefit of Everglades Restoration as outlined in the CERP. Thank you for considering our comments on this important subject.

Sincerely,



Charles Pattison, AICP
Executive Director



C. Allen Watts,
President

cc: 1000 Friends Board Members
Julio Fanjul, SFWMD WRAC Coordinator